

Murtaugh Section of the Snake River

The Thrill of World Class White Water Rafting Right in Our Own Backyard

By Olin Gardner

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The Snake River begins in Teton County, Wyoming and empties into the Columbia River just south of Tri-Cities, Washington. During 1,038 mile trip it makes its most dramatic



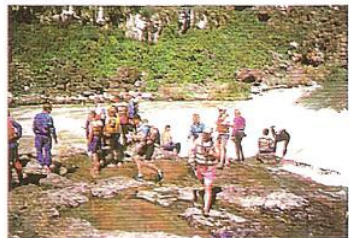
appearance in the area between Burley to Bliss, in a very spectacular and fantastic manner. The specific section of river and canyon that has come to be known as the "Murtaugh" begins at Milner Dam and continues to the slack water just behind Twin Falls on the Snake River. Over the last 15 years this section of the river has become known on a world wide basis, and provides some of the best and most spectacular white water rafting and kayaking in the country. With over 15 major rated rapids, this section of the Snake River offers thrills and chills galore for both local and visitors to our area. Though best known as an expert kayak section, a couple of us local outfitters have been licensed by the State to conduct commercial tours on this section of the river. Water flows can vary from a very low and rocky technical 2500 cubic feet per second to huge big water over 20,000 cfs, each flow variation has its own set of characteristics, but it is a great trip at almost every water level.

The most popular section starts right

above the Murtaugh bridge a mile or so below Starr Falls or the Caldron Linn as it is also known. From this point on down stream there is no access to get out of the Snake River until you get to the takeout at Twin Falls Park. Boaters should be prepared to handle whatever adventures await them in this section of the canyon. Even though the interstate runs right beside the river here, it is 500 feet up. Unless your partial to climbing 100+ year old Chinese wooden ladders up steep



basalt cliffs, you will have to complete your trip through the canyon to get home. During this 14 mile trip you can expect to encounter beautiful waterfalls and scenery. Birds of Prey and waterfowl abound on the river. Though the river and rapids take up most of your attention the wildlife and historical significance of "Murtaugh" is of equal value and importance.



Even though this section on the Snake River has a rather notorious reputation, and has to be approached with respect, caution, and the proper equipment and knowledge, a trip through this section of

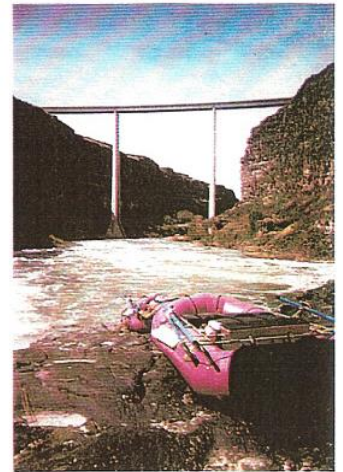


canyon is something almost any one can do. If your a boater with your own gear and experience then you probably know what it takes to get the job done. If not, you can call on one of the licensed outfitters to take you down the river in class and style safely!! The prime time to run the river is in the spring and early summer.

If you have a hanker for excitement and adventure, then consider a trip down the Murtaugh section of the Snake River. The famous thunderous rapids of the canyon await you with names like, *The*

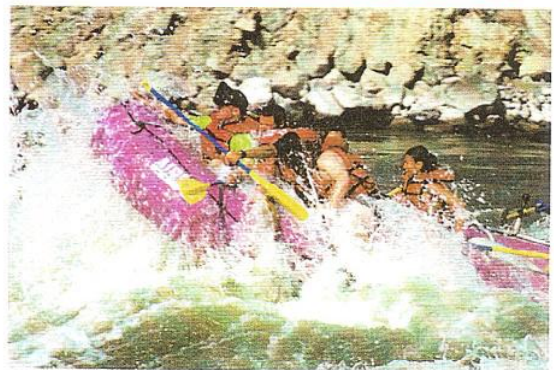
Troll, White Knuckles, Mabeline, Misty, Junkyard, Horseshoe, Redshank, Duckblind, The Idaho Connection and of course lets not forget, *Let's Make a Deal* and *Pair of Dice*.

Whether you are passing through town or have lived here all your life, this is a trip well worth your while and you will thank yourself for the adventure. See you on the river! ■



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